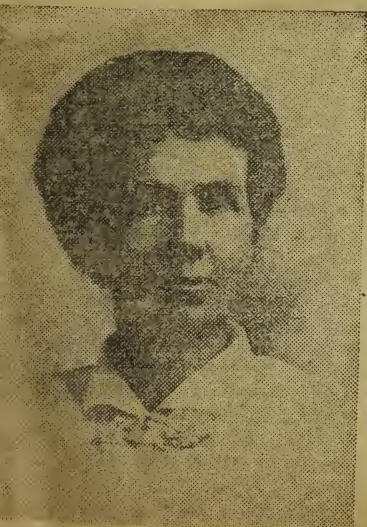


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In
Northern
Iowa



C. A. WEST,
Athletics and Science.



MISS LODENA WILLIS.

Fire Department IS Finely Equipped

MASON CITY FIREMEN TRAVEL
TO FIRES WITH MOTOR APPA-
RATUS — HOUSED IN A FINE
BUILDING.

For a city to become a city of the first class it must first prove itself to be a first-class city and one of the distinctive features of a first-class city is its adequate protection from fire loss. The development of the Mason City fire department has well kept pace with the growth of the city and the current records show that its efficiency in holding down fire loss compares favorably with the other cities of the state of this size and even larger. Beginning with a volunteer fire department of four men, it has grown to an organization of thirteen fire fighters, who receive their monthly pay check to perform their one and only duty.

Equipment.

The Mason City fire department has passed through all stages of development until now it has all the modern equipment in the 96 horsepower triple combination engine that was purchased July 1, 1914. This combination consists of a chemical engine, force pump and several lengths of hose. This huge engine is capable of forcing water to the top of the highest buildings and can attain a speed of between fifty and sixty miles an hour on the road. Another 30-horsepower motor which answers all fire calls is equipped with two hand chemicals and carries 1000 feet of hose. This engine was purchased in August of 1914. Besides the two fast motors there is a horse drawn chemical which is kept in reserve only for urgent calls and a horse drawn hook and ladder wagon equipped with a complete outfit.

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Best
High
School

MASON CITY'S SCHOOLS

In
Northern
Iowa

By F. M. HAMMITT, Principal.

Won Typing Contest.

Last year Mason City High school was proud of the fact that they won the typewriting contest in Iowa. That last year's winning was not a freak was shown this year when Mason City won first and second. Mr. Clifford Kuppinger easily excelled all students who had less than one year's training in typewriting, while Mr. Joseph Bryson lost first place by less than three words per minute. These results are a clear justification for the money that is being spent for commercial education. A prominent business man recently made this statement: "We have tried a number of people in our office, and it was not until we secured one of the graduates of the Mason City High school that we found a person that could handle the work."

Graduates Stand Well.

Another test of an institution is how the products compare with the

cago, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Missouri.

Debating Work.

Debating and public speaking is rapidly coming to play an important part in the student life of the Mason City High school. One of the largest crowds that ever attended a debate in the city was present at the debate between Mason City and Clinton. Mason City won a unanimous decision and it was the opinion of the judges that the team was one of the best ever developed in Northern Iowa.

This year when the Declamatory contests were put before the students, twenty-eight students immediately asked to enter these contests, and others that applied later had to be refused. These contests were exciting and the interest shown by the student body was pleasing to all people who are interested in this form of work. For some years past Mason City has always had one or two people who by their own initiative had equipped themselves to represent the school in declamatory contests, but this is the first year that the school offered training to those who decided to take the work.

Athletic Record.

Under the direction of Coaches Bailey and West the athletic interests of the High school have been advanced steadily of late, and the school is now taking part in many forms of athletic endeavor in which contestants wearing the red and black were in the past unknown.

The spirit manifested in the school now is very good in this regard, faithful support being accorded the teams put out by the school, win or lose. The boys who go away and do their best and do not bring home first prizes are just as well received as though they broke state records.

Good attendance of the student body at all athletic events has been assured during the past year by the



Present High School Building.

sibly be required in that regard. In fact, the building, like a modern factory will appear to be largely windows.

With the erection of this building, and the addition of the equipment which it can house, which can not be

used in the present school the scope of usefulness of the high school to the community, in every department, will be much increased, and the sphere of influence of the public schools will be constantly broadening.



ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH

HAS A FINE SCHOOL

One of the finest parochial schools of the state is situated in Mason City, in connection with St. Joseph's Roman Catholic church, and known as St. Joseph's Convent. Eight years ago the old building burned to the ground, and the present building was erected on the old site.

The building is four story, of brick, surrounded by fine old trees, and a well-kept lawn, with a very large playground in back. Though it was thought at the time the structure was erected that ample room had been allowed for growth, it is now thought that in the near future plans must be made for more class rooms. The large basement has a kitchen, a dining room for girl students, and also a private dining room for the Sisters. On the first floor there is a very large central hall, with nine class rooms opening from it, and along the south side is the beautiful little chapel, and a large reception room. The music rooms, three in number, are also on this floor, in the west wing. On the second floor are the dormitories for the Sisters, and the out-of-town students, and also the community room, and on the fourth is the large auditorium, running the full length of the building, known as St. Joseph's hall, in which the children stage their school plays and programs, and which the different societies of the church utilize as a meeting place. In a formerly unused portion of the basement a gymnasium has very recently been fitted up for the boys of the school, and it was almost entirely through their own efforts that they secured most of the equipment for it. This has been a great source of

C. A. WEST,
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The
Finest
Library

Mason City's Public Library

In
Northern
Iowa

By BERTHA S. BAIRD, Librarian

I READ something in TACLES about rats, I want to know if it is true"; "What have you in the library about super-heated steam?" What is the height of Queen Elizabeth?" "I want a suggestion for a book review of a book portraying a young life"; "I just saw a bird with a peculiar marking, I want to identify it"; "What is the legend of the Northern Lights?" "What is the address of the Carnegie Corporation of New York?" "What are the provisions of the Keating-Owen bill?" "Where are the headquarters of the federal courts of Iowa?" "Have you any books about efflorescence in brick?" "How is Bar-le-Duc made?" "We want the text of the Dick Miltia Act"; "Do you know where I could find Commodore Perry?" "I want a recipe for preparing calves' brains"; "What is in the library about the United States coast survey?" "Have you any books about the care and feeding of babies?"

These few quotations may give a partial conception of the variety of questions which are constantly coming to the workers in the big building on the corner of State and Superior streets. Questions which come from people of all ages, of every rank and degree of education, from people who have realized that "When in doubt, it is wise to consult the Public Library," and that for assistance in answering any question the library is "as near you as your telephone."

Only One Phase.

But this is only one phase of the work of the library, as one who happens to be near or in the library any day after school will realize as he

sees the many children who come with happy faces, either to get books to take home or to spend an hour of delight in the children's room, reading and looking at the pictures. But Tuesday is the happiest day of all, for that is "story hour day," when the children's librarian introduces them to the riches of fairy and folk lore, to the literature of all ages.

The children living too far from the library to come to it frequently are not neglected, for the library has placed books in all the schools and as the library assistant goes from school to lend the books to the children, she is often met with, "Oh, here comes the library teacher, goodie goodie, we can have libraries today."

The library board through the work of the library staff is seeking in every way to make the library of benefit to every man, woman and child in Mason City, to "peopleize" the resources of this fast growing institution.

A Fast Growing Institution.

And it has been a fast growing institution, from a library of seven hundred volumes in 1889 to 13,114 in 1916; from a circulation of 1060 in 1889 to a circulation of 67,669 in 1915. In 1889, there was a per capita circulation of only .036 of a book in 1915 it had increased to 3.94 books.

Those who have been interested in the library from its earliest days often marvel at the progress which has been made and recall the early days of the movement and the long struggle before it became a well established institution.

As far back as 1871, forty-five years ago, when the population of Mason City was only 1183 there was evidence of a strong sentiment to-

wards a public reading room. In those days Mason City had open saloons, and Rev. S. M. Hudson, pastor of the Methodist church, in his sermon one Sunday morning, spoke of the deplorable facts of the situation and urged that some means be supplied whereby men could find a place to congregate, where they would have an opportunity to improve their minds instead of deadening them. The sermon made an impression and shortly after, the agitation was commenced for a reading room. How this could be brought about was a serious question in the minds of those who saw its need, but the agitation was continued. In January of that year a meeting of citizens was called which was presided over by J. V. W. Montague. Curtis Bate, Sr., was selected secretary and an organization was formed known as the Occidental Library association. Those who became members were asked to pay a fee of \$5 and to contribute every year thereafter for its maintenance. Inside of three months they reported three hundred volumes with several periodicals for circulation.

First Home for Books.

The books were first kept in the Shepard building and after two or three years were removed to the rear room of the City Bank, then a little building on the corner of State and Main, where the Boyd Smoke Shop is now located. After a time, about the year 1873, the books were removed to the bank building of I. R. Kirk. Mrs. Mary Card had charge of them, who, the records tell us, was unceasing in her efforts in repairing and caring for them. One of the most prized treasures in the local history collection of the library, is the printed catalog of this first li-



MRS. BAIRD, Librarian.

brary, a catalog of 245 titles, printed in 1871.

During these days there was a constant struggle to keep the library in operation, and at times it seemed that it must die for want of proper support. Money was given by some and the president of the association, Dr. A. A. Noyes, conducted a lecture course, hoping the proceeds would add materially to the funds. Mr. Noyes, in writing of this venture, says: "He secured the talent, and to be sure it was a brilliant array and ought to have attracted the whole population of Cerro Gordo county." On the list were Brigham Young's nineteenth wife, Elizabeth Cady Stanton; Theodore Tilton, Du Chailluz, the African traveler, Tan Kee, the

Chinese lecturer. Unfortunately this effort was not profitable, for when the course was finished there was a deficit of \$15.

The presidency of Dr. Noyes covered a period of about thirteen years and after he left the city the books were kept at Hurd's jewelry store for a time, when they were taken to the office of Doctors Dakin and Osborne. Many had been destroyed and some were lost. For a few years the library interest waned and the town was without a reading room.

Women to the Rescue.

But after a time a number of noble women came to the rescue. The saloons had been put out of the town, and a great need of a reading room was felt. Those interested in the venture asked for the old books and after some hesitation on the part of the remnant of the old association, they were given, but not without the understanding that they were to be returned in case the present effort failed. A building on South Main street near the location of the Bijou theatre was rented, which served both as a reading room, a home for the librarian, and quarters upstairs for a tenant, from whom some remuneration was received to help with the rent. Miss Mary Hurlbut was secured as librarian. Coffee and sandwiches were served Saturday afternoon, and every effort made to attract to the new reading room.

First Permanent Officers.

Thus the library was set on foot again with a remnant of the old books, a few newspapers and magazines. It was on November 10th, in 1888, when all arrangements were completed and the following permanent officers were elected:

President—Mrs. J. A. Farrell.
Vice-President—Mrs. Cable.
Secretary—Miss Mable Emsley.

Treasurer—Mrs. Elizabeth Han-

ford.
Directors—Mrs. Dakin, Mrs. Lloyd, Mrs. Glass, Mrs. Bare, Mrs. John Stanbery, Mrs. Manchester and Mrs. M. I. Clark

But the struggle was only begun. Money was not forthcoming at a rapid rate, so there were many suppers, fairs, luncheons, entertainments, etc., to swell the library fund. Cards for yearly membership were sold and a charge of 5c made for every book taken from the room. After a time the board of directors became satisfied that the movement was on a sure and safe footing and in 1891 petitioned the city council for a tax for support and received a levy of one mill. By this time the library, or reading room, as it was usually called, had outgrown its quarters, and in 1892, the board secured a building on East State street, where the Cut-rate Grocery is now located. The cost was \$3500, \$600 of which was raised by the women for the first payment, and the new library was opened on September 24, 1892, with music by the band and great rejoicing.

In 1899 the whole community was saddened by the death of Miss Hurlbut, the librarian, and her sister, Mrs. Anna Chapin, who had assisted her, took up the work and served until September, 1911, when the present librarian succeeded her.

The New Library.

In the fall of 1900, the building owned by the library caught fire. Few of the books, however, were destroyed, but many were injured by water and smoke. After the fire, the property known as the Tiffany home, located where the present library building now stands, was secured. The location and grounds were ideal, but the building was

sadly inadequate to the needs of the growing library. Through the efforts of Mrs. S. D. Allen and Mr. J. E. Blythe, a gift of \$20,000 was secured from Mr. Carnegie for the erection of a new building. Later it was found that \$20,000 was not sufficient for the building planned and after an unsuccessful effort to induce Mr. Carnegie to add to his gift, a subscription of \$11,500 more was raised among the public spirited citizens and women's clubs consequently the Mason City Public Library is the gift of Mr. Andrew Carnegie and Mason City citizens.

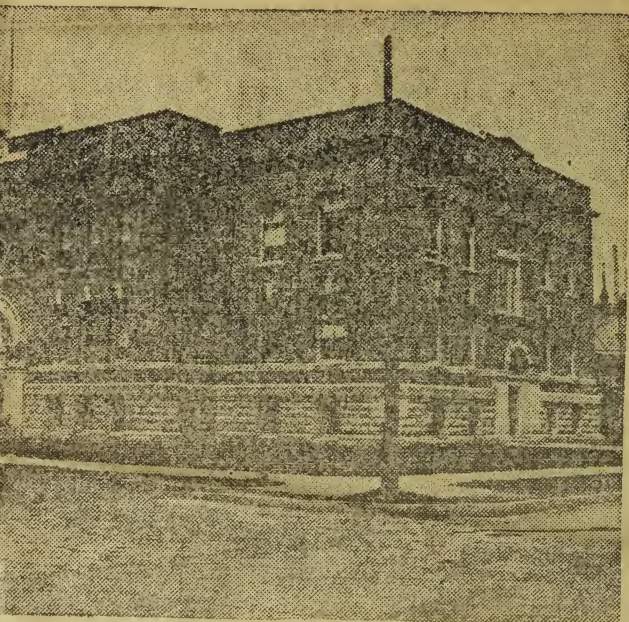
After much time and devoted labor on the part of the trustees, the beautiful building was completed and on January 10, 1905, over eleven years ago, it was dedicated, and the dedication was a most joyous occasion.

With the exception of the art room the second story of the library was not finished at first, because the extra rooms were not needed, but they were built because the committee in charge was far-sighted enough to realize that with the growth of the city and library, space for expansion would be needed. It is the decision of the library board that the time has come when the library building must be completed, and the plans are now being made to finish the rooms and move the children's department into what will be the best equipped and most attractive children's rooms it is possible to have.

The public library is the most democratic institution in the city, and should be a city's best investment, paying large dividends in education, culture and development. What it means to the city is limited only by what the people in their use of it, determine it shall mean.

CITY'S SCHOOL

M. HAMMITT, Principal.



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